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September 8, 2004

Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States House of Representatives
2108 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Markey:

As an organization committed to educating young people around the importance of civic engagement and voting rights, Mobilizing America's Youth is pleased to endorse H.R. 4972, the "Gateway to Democracy Act of 2004." We applaud your efforts in introducing this important legislation in the House.

Mobilizing America's Youth is an all-partisan network dedicated to educating, empowering, and energizing young people to increase our civic engagement and political participation. Our efforts are centered around 16 to 30 year old youth educating their peers and taking the initiative to advocate on behalf of their generation's interest. Although many member of our Mobilizer Teams around the country are not yet old enough to vote, they are active in service and advocacy within their communities, and this bill will assist them in becoming full citizens.

Too often young people fail to participate in the first election for which they are eligible to vote, and they are consistently the age demographic with the lowest voter turnout. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the 2000 general election only 45.4% of 18 to 24 year olds were registered to vote and only 32.3% voted. Many young people miss voting in the first few elections after they reach age 18 simply because they have not yet registered to vote. By allowing young people to pre-register to vote when they get their driver's license, the Gateway to Democracy provides a simple solution and a first step to overcoming the difficult problem of getting young people registered and voting.

On behalf of Mobilizing America's Youth, Mobilize.org, and our Mobilizer Teams throughout the country, I thank you for your commitment to the youth of our nation. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue of youth empowerment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David B. Smith", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David B. Smith
Executive Director
Mobilizing America's Youth and Mobilize.org